Welcome

Travel Counselors and Certified Travel Specialists
Only when normal things are not normal anymore do we realize how special normal things are.
Revisiting the Visitor Experience
A Fresh Focus
"The real act of discovery consists not in finding new lands but in seeing with new eyes."

French novelist Marcel Proust
Best Practices... an illusion?

• You’ve reached an endpoint – nothing left to top
• Challenge: Continually search for BETTER PRACTICES
Challenge: “Think Different” – “Think”

• “Visitor Servicing” vs. “Visitor Information Center
• It’s all about the Destination Experience
• You are the ‘Custodian’ of Regional Stories
• Identify gaps and OFI’s
• Embrace Digital Visitor Servicing (manage/respond to on-line reviews – tap social media to share stories – provide on-line messaging + chat)
• Engage/Collaborate with local industry
• Help educate service providers
• Never accept the Status Quo
LA Welcome Center Strengths

- Ability to customize assistance for travelers based on age, gender, family, singles, conservatives
- Engaging visitors into FUN
- Not a very physical job – easier to promote from within or recruit retirees
- Supervisors are given leeway to customize local policy based on their personality and who they work with, i.e., scheduling/uniforms
- Effective leaders who listen
LA Welcome Center Challenges

- Delivering unpleasant news: hotel availability/rates/dates and travel time to events
- Limited input when policies are changed
- Communication (policies that are changed/updated)
- Balancing staff and automation (visitors still prefer tangible items)
- Staffing due to current pay scale...although improved
- Visitors lack understanding that literature/coffee are FREE
Today’s Travel Trends
Travel Trends

- Consumers spending less on products – more on experiences
- Leisure travel returned to 2019 levels (Mastercard Economics Institute)
- “New sense of urgency” to hit the road: 73% plan to travel
- Major economic boogeymen: inflation, staff shortages, and supply chain issues
Travel Trends Cont’d.

• 57% of travelers wish for a single all-inclusive app for their travel planning and booking needs (travelperk.com)

• 5 out of 6 travelers are choosing secluded mountains, rural escapes and waterfront getaways (prnewswire.com)

• The Year of the “GOAT”…Greatest of all trips (Expedia)

• Family Reunions and “Friendcations” are popular (VIP Traveler)
Certified TRAVEL Specialist

8 State Welcome Centers
44 Regional Centers
Goals

Simplify
• and personalize the travel planning experience

Offer
• complementary services and proactive one-on-one marketing

Benefit
• maximize tourism expenditures in the state
BE INTENTIONAL

SAFETY FIRST

- Stay informed
- Monitor customer feedback
- Post on website/social media...small/non-intrusive banners
- Tap into community resources
- Clean and Sanitize (EPA-approved)
- Open line of communication...clear messaging
Reviews...do they matter?
Tripadvisor Testimonies

• The Lake Charles Visitors Center is aesthetically beautiful with alligator sculptures and artwork. Picked up brochures of areas of interest in southwest Louisiana.

• We felt like the people of the Atchafalaya Welcome Center are family...they care as much as family about making our vacation a good one. The Welcome Center itself has terrific nature and product displays, information, and brochures about the Atchafalaya basin. The center even has a small "Disney" like theater in the round that does a short film. Outside, there are life size alligators, tortoises, a gazebo, and areas for kids to play. We highly recommend stopping here.

• I learned about many historical sites around this visitor center that are not on TripAdvisor. Glad I stopped in to pick up historical site brochures. I also took a picture of the Father of Zydeco, ...

• Finally, A Visitors Center! The Louisiana Welcome Center is located in an historic building in the heart of the French quarter on Jackson Square. After 2 other stops in places that were calling themselves visitors centers, we found a real one here. Though small in size, we found maps, information and brochures on everything for New Orleans and the surrounding areas and a very helpful staff. French spoken and free coffee.
Tripadvisor Testimonies

• We couldn’t decide what yours to book, which company to book with and there were so many different places to go and see in New Orleans it was confusing. So, we went to the Welcome Centre and saw Sam, who was brilliant! Everyone should just go see Sam. He described every tour, found out what we wanted to see most, booked us on the right tour and hopefully saved us money too. He was such fun and so descriptive we could’ve spent all day just chatting, really fun.

• Slidell Visitor’s Center: Made it into the building just as huge rainstorm hit. I barely beat the storm across the state line and wanted to make sure of where I was going before I went much further in that weather. Appreciated the clean restrooms and free coffee and the knowledgeable, helpful staff. People were constantly coming and going, but the one lady (I’m sorry I forget her name) treated me like I was the only one in the building, made sure my questions were answered, and marked some other places on the map that we might be interested in. She took the time and really listened to where we came from and what we were interested in doing instead of just handing us a set list. She then also didn’t just tell us where to go but made sure I knew how to get there.
Testimonies...Attention to Detail

• Aesthetically beautiful; Stroll on the deck; good parking; well done displays
• Felt like the people are family...they care as much as family about making our vacation a good one
• After 2 other stops in places that were calling themselves visitors centers, we found a ‘real one’ French spoken and free coffee
• Sam, was brilliant
• Appreciated the clean restrooms and free coffee and the knowledgeable, helpful staff
• Treated me like I was the only one in the building
• Didn't just tell us where to go but made sure I knew how to get there; staff will steer you in the right direction
• Knowledgeable volunteers eager to help...recommended stop
• Nice place/friendly staff eager to help
**The Importance of Customer Reviews**

- **Key driver to attract more visitors**
- **Increases brand trust and credibility**
- **Improves service delivery**
- **Better understanding of your visitors**
- **Powerful marketing tool**
- **Ability to personalize response**

**ASK –**
**Link on Website –** TripAdvisor & Yelp
**Review Cards**
## Secure Zip Code & Number in Party

### Sign In Sheet

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INTERNAL CUSTOMER SERVICE

Who are Internal Customers?
- People on your Team
- Your Supervisor
- People in other departments

Common Characteristics
- Frequent interactions
- Close relationships
- Two-way service

Treat your team as you would like to be treated!

First Step:
Define Outstanding Service
PEOPLE PERFORM BEST AND DELIVER THE BEST SERVICE WHEN THEY LIKE WHAT THEY DO!
Collaborating teams/individuals are success drivers

Motivation, commitment, and satisfaction propel employees to utilize skills

Exceptional interactions stand out...extra-mile travelers

Positive attitudes are contagious...a 'rallying call'

Increased higher levels of safety and innovation

Social interactions impact well-being
WHAT'S YOUR SUPER POWER?
VISITOR ENGAGEMENT...RELATIONSHIP MARKETING

The ‘Key’ to Repeat Visitors

ENGAGE WITH YOUR VISITORS

YOU are your Parish, Region and State

Undivided attention

Personalize interactions

Understand needs

The ‘Hello’ and ‘Goodbye’
EQUALLY BENEFICIAL IN ELEVATING YOUR BRAND IMAGE

Visitor Experience

- The emotional connection; how visitors feel
- A holistic metric which develops an image in the mindset of a visitor...hassle-free, accessibility

Visitor Engagement

- The reaction visitors have while visiting an establishment
- Tangible actions includes all the touch-points that exist between the brand and visitor
Does Your Center project a "WELCOMING PRESENCE?"

- Aesthetically – rocking chairs/interactive exhibits/clean restrooms
- Polite, engaging, and knowledgeable staff
- Wi-fi - Kiosk
- Free coffee
- Human touch
<table>
<thead>
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<th>CUSTOMER SERVICE ETIQUETTE</th>
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<tr>
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| Attitude & Impressions     |
| Proactive Service          |
| Personalize                |
| Manners & Vocabulary Matter|
| Expectations: Meet before Exceeding |
| Follow-up and Follow-through |
MANNERS & VOCABULARY MATTER

- Good manners are ageless and genderless
- How you say what you say is ‘FIVE TIMES’ more important than the words you use
- Adopt positive words and phrases
- Acknowledge when concerns/issues/recommendations are brought to your attention
“Welcome.” / “We’re so glad you are here.”

“It’s my pleasure.” / “I am happy to…”

“Thank you…”/ “We appreciate…”

“Is there anything else I can do for you?”

“We appreciate your choosing Louisiana.”

With knowledge you attract minds and with good manners you attract hearts.

Moustafa Nour
## Two Dimensions of Service

### Procedural
- Information
- Products and Service
- Assistance

### Personal
- Empathy
- Helpfulness
- Enthusiasm
- Responsiveness
- Expertise
- Reliability
- Friendliness
- Patience
HOSPITALITY & SERVICE

Remember regardless of positive feedback, you always start over with the next customer.

SERVICE
- Professionally responding
- Taking action
- Task-driven
- Order-taking

HOSPITALITY
- Welcoming professionally
- Demonstrating a sense of urgency
- Service-provider
- Building an emotional connection
PERSONALIZE

- Humanize Interactions (coworkers/customers)
- Ask open questions
- Offer options
- Obtain – Document – Use Feedback

Caring interactions are a result of listening before acting.
CUSTOMERS WHO DON’T FEEL VALUED

Dear Customer

BECOME SOMEONE ELSE’S CUSTOMER.

MARTYN JONES
TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE

YOUR ‘STOREFRONT’ WINDOW

The Human Connection
UPON 60 SECONDS PEOPLE WILL MAKE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT YOUR...

EDUCATION – BACKGROUND – ABILITY – PERSONALITY

based on your voice alone
MANNERS MATTER: Reflect respect and professionalism… always noticed and in style.

- Introduce your business with a cheerful greeting: “Good Morning/Afternoon,” vs. “May I help you?”
- “How may I help you?” or “How may I direct your call?”
- Speak with clarity and enthusiasm - slow down. Your Tone is 86% - Words 14% of your message.
- Repeat anything involving numbers twice (prices/dates/CC numbers).
- Never eat - drink - chew gum during a call or interrupt the caller.
- Listen attentively - take notes.
- Ask permission before placing a caller on hold.
- Always allow caller to hang up first!
EXPECTATIONS:
MEET BEFORE EXCEEDING

- FINE-TUNE THE ‘BASICS’
- QUALITY AT EVERY TURN
- EXCEEDING … “A TEAM EFFORT”
- SOLUTION-ORIENTED
- CONSISTENT

Keep the Main Thing…the Main Thing
THE POWER OF IMPRESSIONS
Senses Impact Customer Perception

What Customers See

What Customers Smell

What Customers Hear

What Customers Touch

Will Customers talk + or – about their experience?
FIRST IMPRESSIONS

- Appearance Matters
- Optimistic Mindset
- Authenticity - Sincerity
- Acknowledge...individuals and groups
- Facial expressions speak volumes
- Maintain eye contact
- Positive body language
- Active listening
- Names personalize
- Mutual respect
Every contact we have with a visitor influences whether they will come back.

We must be ‘ON STAGE,’ every single time.
WHENEVER YOU DO A THING...

ACT AS IF THE WORLD WERE WATCHING.

Thomas Jefferson
THANK YOU, LTA…
PROUD TO SERVE AS YOUR PARTNER IN PROGRESS

MY SOUL HAS BEEN FED…
THANKS TO MY EXPERIENCE WITH YOU!

WE CAN DO IT!

fivestarcustomerservice.com
Rita Suiter, Owner/Coach
229.563.7482 – 5starcss@bellsouth.net